

# The Inspiration of the Bible

## I. What Does the Bible Claim as to Inspiration?

Ex.4:10-15; Dt.4:2; Jer.1:7-9; Eze. 3:4; Mic.3:8

These are a few of the many passages (about 1,000) in which the inspiration of the OT writers is affirmed and claimed.

That they were not deceived in their claims is evident from the minuteness and detail as to names, times, and places which characterized their messages, and from the literal fulfillment of their prophecies.

The writers of the NT claim inspiration for OT writers as well as for themselves.

Mt.10:20; Lk.12:12; 21:14,15; Acts 1:16; 2:4; 4:31; 28:25;  
I Cor.2:13; 14:37; I Thes.2:13; I Pet.1:10,11; II Pet.1:20,21;

3:1,2

TOTAL= 1,098x's in 1,095 vs. (Add 16= **1,114**)

[Evans, 3,808x's; Keyser, fully 2,000x's]

"Word of the Lord" 258x's in 255 vs. (OT 245x's in 242 vs.)

"And God said" 30x's in 30 vs. (OT 30x's in 30 vs.)

"God said" 46x's in 46 vs.

"And God spake" 6x's in 6 vs. (OT 5x's in 5 vs.)

"God commanded" 14x's in 14 vs. (OT 13x's in 13 vs.)

"God appeared" 2x's in 2 vs. (OT 2x's in 2 vs.)

"the Lord said" 219x's in 219 vs. (OT 203x's in 203 vs.)

"the Lord spake" 144x's in 144 vs. (OT 143x's in 143 vs.)

"thus saith the Lord" 415x's in 415 vs. (OT 415x's in 415 vs.)

"Holy Ghost/Spirit" AND "spake/spoke/saith/said" 10x's in 10 vs.

~~(John 7:39 KJV) (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)~~

(Acts 1:16 KJV) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, **which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake** before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

(Acts 4:31 KJV) And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; **and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God** with boldness.

~~(Acts 10:44 KJV) While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.~~

(Acts 19:6 KJV) And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

(Acts 28:25 KJV) And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

(2 Pet 1:21 KJV) For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Dt.18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Used only twice  
in Scripture:  
Job 32:8 & II

II. What is Meant by the Term "Inspiration"?

A. The biblical use of the term.

i.e. *wisdom*  
an *animal* } iff,

II Timothy 3:16

**G2315**. theopneustos, *theh-op'-nyoo-stos*; from **G2316** and

a presumed der. of **G4154**; *divinely breathed in*:—given by inspiration of God.

**G2316**. theos, *theh'-os*; of uncert. affin.; a *deity*, espec. (with **G3588**) the supreme *Divinity*; fig. a *magistrate*; by Heb. *very*:—X exceeding, God, god [-ly, -ward].

**G4154**. pneo, *pneh'-o*; a prim. word; *to breathe hard*, i.e. *breeze*:—

blow. Comp. **G5594**.

**G5594**. psucho, *psoo'-kho*; a prim. verb; to *breathe* (*voluntarily* but *gently*; thus differing on the one hand from **G4154**, which denotes prop. a *forcible* respiration; and on the other from the base of **G109**, which refers prop. to an inanimate *breeze*), i.e. (by impl. of reduction of temperature by evaporation) to *chill* (fig.):—wax cold.

Cf. Matthew 24:12, “**And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.**” [12 . dia:G1223 anomia:G458 .

plethuno:G4129 . agape:G26 . polus:G4183 . psucho:G5594]

B. The historical and contemporary use of the term.

## **Several Theories of Inspiration**

### *Natural Inspiration*

Genius of a high order, but not supernatural, mysterious, or peculiar.

This is the type of inspiration that Milton, Shakespeare, or Confucius show in their writings.

No man of candor or intelligence, however, can go from reading Shakespeare to reading the Bible without feeling that the difference between the two is more than just by degree. It is a sense that one's reading is now of a different kind—he has not climbed another level in the same human dwelling, but he has gone into a new realm altogether.

There is a certain “unknown quality” in the Book which clearly distinguishes it from all others. That unknown quality is Divine Inspiration.

### *Universal Christian Inspiration, or Illumination*

The ordinary Christian of today is inspired as much as the Bible writers. (Then it ought to be plausible that a new Bible could be written for today.)

### *Mechanical Inspiration or Dictation*

Ignores human faculties, and claims the writers were passive as machines. (How then does one account for differences in style?)

### *Concept, or Thought Inspiration*

Only concepts or thoughts were given by Inspiration.

### *Verbal Inspiration*

The Holy Ghost gave the very words of Scripture. The writers were not left absolutely to themselves in the choice of words that they should use.

## Partial Inspiration

"The Bible *contains* the Word of God." (Who decides what is and what is not inspired?) Such a theory leaves man in awful and fatal uncertainty.

## *ary, or Full, Inspiration*

All Scripture is equally inspired. II Tim. 3:16

Revised Version says (1952, '53, '62), "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...." NOTE in the footnote of these years it reads: "Or *Every scripture inspired by God is also,*" which is exactly the way the 1881 read and continued to read at least until 1898. If Paul had said, "All Scripture that is inspired by God is ALSO profitable..." he may well have said, "There is *some* part of the Bible, that is *not profitable...*and therefore is not inspired."

This is what humanism (rationalism, hedonism, etc.) wants to make each man the final authority on what is right or wrong, profitable or unprofitable.

Besides, where else did Paul use such unnecessary and impotent expressions? Who needs to be told all divinely-inspired Scripture is *also* profitable? The Greek word *και* does not mean *also* here. It means *and*. Its position in the sentence indicates this.

KJV, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

RV, "And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes"

KJV, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:"

RV, "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is

*hee*; appar. a prim. particle, having a copulative and also a cumulative force; *and, also, even, so, then, too*, etc.; connection (or composition) with other particles or small words, *also, both, but, even, for, if, indeed, likewise, moreover, then, therefore, when, yea, yet*.

The Revised Versionists had used the same translation with Greek construction in other places, there error would look like this: cf. Heb. 4:13 ("All naked things are also open to him with Whom we have to do.") Or, II Tim.4:4 ("Every word of God is also nothing to be rejected.")

The rendering the revisers of 1881 adopted cannot be seen Burgon pronounced it "the most astonishing as well as literary blunder of the age." Bishops Moberly and Archbishop Trench, and others of the revision committee, took responsibility for the rendering.

In spite of all the evidence, we hold to the rendering of the Revised Version, or King James Version, and claim that **all Scripture is fully inspired of God!**

"[The Spirit used the attention, the investigation, the memory, the fancy, the logic, *in a word*, ALL the faculties of the writer. He guided the writer to choose what narratives and materials, speeches of others,

imperial decrees, genealogies, official letters, state papers, or historical matter he found necessary for the recording of the divine message. He worked in and with and through their spirits, so as to preserve the individuality of the writer. He used the men themselves, and spoke through their individualities. **The gold was His; the mold was theirs.**

"[Did Inspiration affect the words? Yes! It is hardly possible that Inspiration could insure the correct transmission of thought without affecting the words in some way. Our conclusion is this: While the Holy Spirit clearly gave men what He wanted them to communicate faithfully, the communication came forth in language that the men themselves would have chosen.

"[Some may not understand this, or consider it an impossibility, apart from *dictation*. But, it is our belief that God works His purposes through the ordinary actions of men, yet does no violence to their individuality or freedom. Also, we believe that God, through His Holy Spirit, works in the hearts of His people so as to develop in each of them the *new man*, while at the same time preserving or retaining the individuality of each person. Thus, the worship and demeanor of each Christian is as distinct as the style of each of the sacred writers of Scripture.

"[Thus, we declare that we believe in Plenary and Verbal Inspiration—that is to say, the words as well as the thoughts have been given, whether indirectly (mediately) or directly (immediately), under the influence of the Holy Spirit. We claim as the Bible claims for itself:

- 1) That the Bible is in deed and in truth the very Word of God; truly divine, and at the same time truly human;
- 2) That it is the revelation of God to His creatures;
- 3) That infallible guidance was given to those who wrote it, so as to preserve them from error;
- 4) That what the writers of the Scriptures have written or said under this guidance is as truly said or written by God as if their instrumentality were not used at all;
- 5) That the ideas expressed in the Bible are the very ideas the Holy Ghost intended to convey;
- 6) That God is in the fullest sense responsible for every word.]"<sup>1</sup>

## SUMMARY

"Every word of Holy Scripture is inspired or "God-breathed". Without impairing the intelligence, individuality, literary style, or personal feelings of the human authors, God supernaturally directed the writing of Scripture so that they recorded in perfect accuracy His comprehensive and infallible revelation to man. If God Himself had

<sup>1</sup> This statement is a heavily edited and revised (by JRRjr) segment from *The Book of Books*, by William Evans, published by Moody Press in 1902.

done the writing, the written Word would be no more accurate and authoritative than it is.

"The inspiration of Scripture is attested by O.T. writers (2 Sam 23:2 - 3; Isa 59:21; Jer 1:9) and by hundreds of instances where the expression "this is what the LORD says" or its equivalent is used. Christ affirms the inspiration of the O.T. (Mat 5:18; 22:42 - 43; Mark 12:36; John 10:35). The apostles bear the same testimony (Acts 1:16; 4:24 - 25; 28:25; Heb 3:7; 10:15 - 16; 2 Pet 1:20 - 21). By means of divine inspiration the writers of Scripture spoke with authority concerning the unknown past, wrote by divine guidance the historical portions, revealed the law, penned the devotional literature of the Bible, recorded the contemporary prophetic message, and prophesied the future. Inspiration extends equally to all Scripture, although only a small portion was given by direct dictation of God, e.g. Exo 20:1; Lev 1:1; Deu 5:4.

"The inspiration of the N.T. was also authenticated by Christ. The apostles claimed inspiration for their portions of the N.T. (1 Cor 2:13; 14:37; Gal 1:7 - 8; 1 Th 4:2,15; 2 Th 3:6,12,14). Paul quotes both Deuteronomy and Luke as Scripture (1 Tim 5:18; cp. Deu 25:4; Luke 10:7). Peter declares all Paul's Epistles to be Scripture (2 Pet 3:16). Although the N.T. sometimes quotes the O.T. loosely, in paraphrase, or interpretively, this is never done in a way to deny the authority or accuracy of the original text. The early apostolic church received the N.T. Scriptures as the inspired Word of God as they were written, though formal recognition of the entire canon came more slowly. Because the Scriptures are inspired, they are authoritative and without error in their original words, and constitute the infallible revelation of God to man."<sup>2</sup>

"INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE The actions of God leading to the writing, preservation, and collection of His words to His people into the Bible. The English word inspiration comes from the Latin word in spiro which mean "to breath in." Inspiration, then, is the influence of the Holy Spirit upon individuals for the purpose of producing an authoritative record of persons, teaching and events.

"Sometimes the inspiration is declared explicitly in biblical assertions. Jeremiah began his prophecy by writing, "The word of the Lord came" (Jer. 1:2); throughout his book the formula is used to emphasize his experience of inspiration. At other times, the inspiration is evident in the pervading mood of the scriptural record. The Bible summarizes this by saying, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). Often the inspiration is a revelation of that which goes beyond normal human cognitive and experiential knowledge. When this is true, then it is most obvious that the information is divinely

inspired. Concerning this, the Bible says, "For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:21 NASB).

"As indicated in the biblical explanation, inspiration is a divine-human encounter whereby God reveals truth. It is a message from God and of God, as well as through persons and for persons. The Bible is divine in its inception. It is a record of God's self-disclosure as Truth and as the source of all truth. Its special revelation is a disclosure of truth that humans could not comprehend through ordinary thought process. Also the Bible is human in its mediation. God revealed Himself to persons He chose. They declared God's attitude toward, His relations with, and His purposes for His people and His world. Inspiration came in the experiences of real men and women with real personalities and problems. A climax to that divine-human encounter is the fact that the Scripture is focused on the divine-human person of Jesus Christ.

"The evidences of divine inspiration are found internally in the record of God's revelation. Some biblical writers claimed they were verbally inspired. Repeatedly, the prophets have attested of this experience. Isaiah interjected into his report, "But I am the Lord thy God.... And I have put my words into thy mouth" (Isa. 51:15-16). Likewise, Jeremiah wrote, "And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth" (Jer. 1:9).

"In addition to the specific statements in the Scriptures, an abundance of internal evidences show divine inspiration from its content in general. Although the Bible is a collection of books written by at least 40 writers over a period of about 1400 years, it has a unity of subject, structure, and spirit. It contains a consistent system of doctrinal and moral utterances. Its unparalleled treatment of certain themes such as the holy, the true, the good, and the future, are mysterious, authoritative, and practical. This witness of its inspiration is attested by countless thousands of testimonies from individuals who have been transformed by the reading of this Book.

"Likewise, many external evidences point to divine inspiration of the Bible. The fact that the Bible is the most widely translated and circulated Book in the world is a testimony of God's providence. This is an amazing record because its early translators were killed, and many of its early readers were imprisoned. Although the Bible has been in existence for almost nineteen centuries, it is still relevant today. Both its quotations and its motifs are found in our literature, oratory, art, music, politics, law, and ethics.

"The expressions of human inspiration are a part of the biblical record. Repeatedly, the biblical writers felt compelled to preface their remarks by identifying God as the sole source of their information. Ezekiel informs us that God had said to him, "You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are

rebellious" (Ezekiel 2:7 NIV). Luke affirmed that his inspiration was tied to his experience of researching the facts about Christ. He explained, "Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3 NIV). Even more surprising is the fact that Paul identified his inspiration as a strong inner impression. With honesty, he said, "Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy" (1 Cor. 7:25 NRSV). On other occasions, the inspiration came through dreams. Matthew wrote, "He had resolved on this, when an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home with you to be your wife' " (Matt. 1:20 REB). At times the inspiration came through visions (Gen. 15:1; Num. 12:6; 1 Sam. 3:1, Isa. 1:1; Ezek. 1:1; Dan. 2:19; Obad. 1; Nah. 1:1; Hab. 2:2). Inspiration also came through historical situations. Paul's letter to the Corinthians is an example of this: "Now for the matters you wrote about" (1 Cor. 7:1 NIV).

"These many different expressions of inspiration show that God is resourceful. His unlimited power has used a variety of techniques to reveal Himself and to communicate His message. Regardless of the method God used to inspire the individual writers, the result is the same. They wrote the Word of God. This is evident both in the content of each book and also in the preservation of all the books in the canon of the Bible.

"The explanations of biblical inspiration are numerous. This is partly due to the fact that the Bible has no theory of inspiration. It simply affirms that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Actually no theory of inspiration is necessary. For the Bible, like Jesus, must be accepted by faith as the inspired Word of God. When this is done, then the choice of a theory of inspiration is incidental.

"According to the natural intuition theory, inspiration is but a higher development of that natural insight into truth which all persons possess to some degree. The biblical writers were inspired as other great geniuses are inspired. This view is very subjective, making all works equally inspired, in spite of the fact that they may be contradictory. It makes the Bible a human, or natural book, rather than a supernatural Book.

"By contrast, the mechanical dictation theory claims that God literally dictated the words of the Bible to the biblical writers. They were used as secretaries or passive instruments. The primary objection to the view is that it is not consistent with God's way of relating to persons. Also, it implies that all of the Bible should have the same literary style.

"The general Christian theory of inspiration is simply that the illumination of the Holy Spirit is experienced by all believers. This is



based on the truth that all believers experience the Spirit. Its weakness is that it overlooks the problem of opposing viewpoints among believers and that it reduces biblical writers to the level of all Christian interpretation and proclamation.

“According to the partial inspiration theory, inspiration is limited to certain parts of the Bible. What the writers would have known naturally is not necessarily inspired. Likewise, incidental matters are not regarded as being inspired. This contradicts the statements of Scripture that all Scripture is inspired.

“The levels of inspiration theory claims that God used different levels of control at different times in the process of inspiration. Sometimes God used superintendence. At other times, God used evaluation, direction, or suggestion. This view holds that particular passages of Scripture carry various degrees of inspiration. In such a theory, the level of inspiration may be rather arbitrary, based on human judgment not divine actions.

“The infallible theory states that the Bible as a whole is without any errors because it is in its entirety the Word of God. Usually those who hold to this view are careful to distinguish between the original manuscripts and the present form of the Bible. However, some claim that this also applies to the current translations because the biblical writers never intended to mislead or deceive. Each of the differences that may be found in parallel passages are harmonized by some type of explanation.

“The verbal inspiration theory states that the Holy Spirit inspired the biblical writers to choose the exact words to convey the message of God. As indicated previously, there are many passages of Scripture that support the idea of verbal inspiration. Nevertheless, some have discredited this view because it does not relate to the differences in the personalities of the biblical writers.

“On the other hand, the dynamic inspiration theory suggests that the Holy Spirit had control over the process of inspiration, but He allowed the individuals to express their personalities in communicating God's message. Those who criticize this view do so on the basis that the view does not guarantee inerrancy in nonreligious matters.

“There are elements of truth in all of the views, and there are also weaknesses in each of the theories. Therefore, some have attempted to splice together ideas from two or more of the theories to develop an eclectic theory. Such an approach is feasible because there is only a slight difference in some of the theories. This might be indicative of the fact that the whole process of developing a theory of inspiration is quite difficult. Phrasing a theory is really secondary to the more important fact that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God and to the calling of obeying that Word. The Bible, itself, takes this position because it has no theory of inspiration. Nevertheless, it emphatically declares itself to be the authoritative record of God's revelation. See

Bible; Revelation, Doctrine of.”

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<sup>3</sup> *Holman Bible Dictionary*, Parsons Technology, 1994.